

House Republican Press Release

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HOUSE APPROVES CHAPIN LEGISLATION TO BAN ALCOHOL INHALATION DEVICES



New Milford Legislator Also Backs Bill Closing Underage Drinking Loophole

On Thursday, April 20, the House of Representatives approved an initiative introduced by State Rep. Clark Chapin, R-New Milford, that would ban alcohol vaporization devices. House Bill 5668, An Act Banning Alcohol Without Liquid Machines, which was approved by the House in a 137-5 vote, now moves to the State Senate for consideration.

Alcohol vaporization devices are machines that process products containing alcoholic liquor with oxygen or another gas to produce a vaporized product for human inhalation. The bill subjects violators who sell, purchase or possess the devices to imprisonment for up to six months, a fine of up to \$1,000, or both.

During a March 9 public hearing in Hartford, state Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) Deputy Commissioner Peter Rockholz, spoke in strong support of HB 5668. He testified the practice of using alcohol without liquid has been in vogue for a number of years in England and other areas of Europe, as it allows young people to become highly intoxicated. Rockholz noted that if the practice were to take hold in Connecticut, it would significantly exacerbate alcohol problems with young people here.

“Eight states have already banned alcohol vaporization devices and nearly 20 others are considering similar legislation,” said Rep. Chapin. “The devices facilitate a very dangerous method of alcohol consumption that has led to overdoses and even deaths. I’m grateful the bill received such overwhelming support in the House of Representatives.”

Also, on Tuesday, April 18, Rep. Chapin voted in favor of legislation that would make it illegal for people to allow underage drinking on private property. House Bill 5211, An Act Concerning Underage Drinking, also moves to the State Senate for consideration.

Under current law, the penalty for illegal underage possession in public places is a fine of \$200 to \$500. HB 5211 makes this the penalty for second and subsequent offenses of illegal possession, regardless of location, and makes a first offense an infraction. It would

make subsequent offenses subject to up to one year in prison, a fine of up to \$500, or both.